Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LAGOS 04230 080958Z

21
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /076 W
---------- 108978
R 080845Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WAHSDC 4339
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 4230

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, WA, SF, OAU, NI
SUBJECT: SWAPO OFFICE IN LAGOS

REF: LAGOS 4119

SUMMARY: OPENING OF SWAPO OFFICE IN LAGOS IS IN LINE WITH FMG'S ACTIVIST SOUTHERN AFRICA POLICY AND UNDERSCORES NIGERIAN COMMITMENT TO AFRICAN LIBERATION CAUSE. FMG MAY HOPE THAT ITS MOVE WILL SOLIDIFY AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR SWAPO AND THUS LESSEN CHANCES OF ANOTHER DIVISIVE CRISIS. WE HAVE NO PRESENT REASON TO BELIEVE FMG WILL EXTEND SIMILAR PRIVILEGE TO A NON-AFRICAN ORGANIZATION AS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PLO. END SUMMARY

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PAGE 02 LAGOS 04230 080958Z

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1. ANNOUNCEMENT THAT FMG HAS DECIDED TO PERMIT SWAPO TO OPEN AN OFFICE IN LAGOS (REFTEL) REPRESENTS DEPARTURE FROM POLICY OF PREVIOUS NIGERIAN ADMINISTRATIONS WHICH DECLINED PERMIT ANY LIBERATION GROUP OPEN OFFICES IN LAGOS. MOVE IS CLEARLY COMPATIBLE WITH FMG'S ACTIVIST POLICY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, HOWEVER, IT UNDERSCORES CURRENT REGIME'S COMMITMENT TO AFRICAN LIBERATION CAUSE AND ITS DESIRE PLAY INFLUENTIAL ROLE ON THE CONTINENT.

2. DECISION MAY ALSO REPRESENT AN ATTEMPT BY FMG AVOID AN ANGOLAN-TYPE CRISIS IN NAMIBIA. FMG MAY HOPE THAT ITS ACTION WILL BOLSTER INTERNAL NAMIBIAN SUPPORT FOR SWAPO AND LESSEN CHANCES OF SERIOUS INTERNECINE CONFLICT BETWEEN VARIOUS NAMIBIAN LIBERATION GROUPS. NIGERIANS COULD CONTEND THAT A STRONG SWAPO WILL SOLIDIFY AFRICAN AND OAU SUPPORT FOR THAT ORGANIZATION THEREBY REDUCING THE POSSIBILITY THAT EXTRA-CONTINENTAL POWERS MIGHT BECOME INVOLVED IN BACKING COMPETING GROUPS. MOVE PROBABLY ALSO REFLECTS NIGERIAN ESTIMATE THAT SWAPO IS MOST LIKELY WINNER IN ANY INTERNAL NAMIBIAN
STRUGGLE FOR POWER.

3. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT FMG INTENDS ITS ACTION SIGNAL ANYTHING MORE THAN FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF ITS SERIOUS COMMITMENT TO SOUTHERN AFRICAN LIBERATION. WE DO NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE ANY PRESENT REASON TO BELIEVE THAT FMG IS PLANNING TO REVERSE ITS DECISION, REAFFIRMED LAST SEPTEMBER, TO DENY THE PLO PERMISSION TO OPEN AN OFFICE IN NIGERIA.
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